

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the resolution and not, obviously, because it condemns violence. We all condemn the violence. But there is more to this resolution than just condemning the violence. I have a problem with most resolutions like this because it endorses a foreign policy that I do not endorse, and it does that by putting on unnecessary demands. So the demands part of this resolution is the part that I object to, not the condemnation of violence.

By doing this, we serve to antagonize. We hear today talk about having solidarity with Israel. Others get up and try in their best way to defend the Palestinians and the Arabs. So it is sort of a contest: Should be we pro-Israel or pro-Arab, or anti-Israel or anti-Arab, and how are we perceived in doing this? It is pretty important.

But I think there is a third option to this that we so often forget about. Why can we not be pro-American? What is in the best interests of the United States? We have not even heard that yet.

I believe that it is in the best interests of the United States not to get into a fight, a fight that we do not have the wisdom to figure out.

Now, I would like to have neutrality. That has been the tradition for America, at least a century ago, to be friends with everybody, trade with everybody, and to be neutral, unless somebody declares war against us, but not to demand that we pick sides in every fight in the world. Yet, this is what we are doing. I think our perceptions are in error, because it is not intended that we make the problem worse. Obviously, the authors of the resolution, do not want to make the problem worse. But we have to realize, perceptions are pretty important. So the perceptions are, yes, we have solidarity with Israel. What is the opposite of solidarity? It is hostility. So if we have solidarity with Israel, then we have hostility to the Palestinians.

I have a proposal and a suggestion which I think fits the American tradition. We should treat both sides equally, but in a different way. Today we treat both sides equally by giving both sides money and telling them what to do. Not \$1 million here or there, not \$100 million here or there, but tens of billions of dollars over decades to both sides; always trying to buy peace.

My argument is that it generally does not work, that there are unintended consequences. These things backfire. They come back to haunt us. We should start off by defunding, defunding both sides. I am just not for giving all of this money, because every time there are civilians killed on the Israeli side or civilians killed on the Palestinian side, we can be assured that either our money was used directly or indirectly to do that killing.

So we are, in a way, an accomplice on all of this killing because we fund both sides. So I would argue we should consider neutrality, to consider friendship with both sides, and not to pretend that we are all so wise that we know exactly with whom to have solidarity. I think that is basically our problem. We have a policy that is doomed to fail in the Middle East; and it fails slowly and persistently, always drawing us in, always demanding more money.

With the Arabs, we cannot tell the Arabs to get lost. The Arabs are important. They have a lot of oil under their control. We cannot flaunt the Arabs and say, get lost. We must protect our oil. It is called "our oil." At the same time, there is a strong constituency for never offending Israel.

I think that we cannot buy peace under these circumstances. I think we can contribute by being more neutral. I think we can contribute a whole lot by being friends with both sides. But I believe the money is wasted, it is spent unwisely, and it actually does not serve the interests of the American people.

First, it costs us money. That means that we have to take this money from the American taxpayer.

Second, it does not achieve the peace that we all hope to have.

Therefore, the policy of foreign noninterventionism, where the United States is not the bully and does not come in and tell everybody exactly what to do, by putting demands on them, I think if we did not do that, yes, we could still have some moral authority to condemn violence.

But should we not condemn violence equally? Could it be true that only innocent civilians have died on one side and not the other? I do not believe that to be the case. I believe that it happens

on both sides, and on both sides they use our money to do it.

I urge a no vote on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, like most Americans, I was appalled by the suicide bombings in Israel over the weekend. I am appalled by all acts of violence targeting noncombatants. The ongoing cycle of violence in the Middle East is robbing generations of their hopes and dreams and freedom. The cycle of violence ensures economic ruin and encourages political extremism; it punishes, most of all, the innocent.

The people of the Middle East must find a way to break this cycle of violence. As Secretary of State Colin Powell told the House International Relations Committee in October, "You have got to find a way not to find justifications for what we are doing, but to get out of what we are doing to break the cycle."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with our Secretary of State. The Secretary also said that we need to move beyond seeing the two sides there as "just enemies." I agree with that too. But I don't think this piece of legislation moves us any closer to that important goal. While it rightly condemns the senseless acts of violence against the innocent, it unfortunately goes much further than that--and that is where I regrettably must part company with this bill. Rather than stopping at condemning terrorism, this bill makes specific demands in Israel and the Palestinian areas regarding internal policy and specifically the apprehension and treatment of suspected terrorists. I don't think that is our job here in Congress.

Further, it recommends that the President suspend all relations with Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority if they do not abide by the demands of this piece of legislation. I don't think this is a very helpful approach to the problem. Ceasing relations with one side in the conflict is, in effect, picking sides in the conflict. I don't think that has been our policy, nor is it in our best interest, be it in the Middle East, Central Asia, or anywhere else. The people of the United States contribute a substantial amount of money to both Israel and to the Palestinian people. We have made it clear in our policy and with our financial assistance that we are not taking sides in the conflict, but rather seeking a lasting peace in the region. Even with the recent, terrible attack. I don't think this is the time for Congress to attempt to subvert our government's policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Finally, the bill makes an attempt to join together our own fight against those who have attacked the United States on September 11 and Israel's ongoing dispute with the Palestinians. I don't think that is necessary. We are currently engaged in a very difficult and costly effort to seek out and bring to justice those who have attacked us and those who supported them, "wherever they may be," as the president has said. Today's reports of the possible loss of at least two of our servicemen in Afghanistan drives that point home very poignantly. As far as I know, none of those who attacked us had ties to Palestine or were harbored there. Mr. Speaker, I think we can all condemn terrorism wherever it may be without committing the United States to joining endless ongoing conflicts across the globe.